

REMARKS

Claims 1 to 6 have been amended. Claims 7-14 have been added. Thus, Claims 1-14 are pending in this application.

I. Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112

The Examiner rejected Claims 1-4 under 35 USC §112 as being indefinite. Applicant amended Claims 1-6 to more clearly define the present invention. Thus, Applicant believes that all relationships of all elements of the claims are now clearly defined and recited. Thus, Applicant believes that the above rejection is now overcome.

II. Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102

The Examiner rejected claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Burns. Applicant amended claims 1-6 and therefore Applicant respectfully disagrees with the rejection. The amended claims clearly define the present invention and includes limitations neither shown nor suggested by Burns. For example, the present invention comprises a plurality of signal processing units serially coupled through a branch off data line from a first signal processing unit to a last signal processing unit. Each signal processing unit, thus, depends on the functionality of the units serially coupled between the distributor node of the central data line and the unit itself. Burns does not show such a structure. The system of Burns shows a system with a redundant bus structure where each unit is coupled directly with the bus. No connected unit depends on the functionality of any other connected unit.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Judd.

The Examiner stated that Judd discloses "*a return from the last to the first signal processing unit*" in col. 6, lines 58-59. The cited lines read:

"The address circuitry in each sensor interface simultaneously all of the data busses."

Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's conclusion that this line discloses or suggests the respective limitation of the claim. Furthermore, all figures of Judd disclose nothing more than what has been described in the present application as prior art. See in particular Fig. 1 and the associated description of the present specification.

III. Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103

The Examiner rejected claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Schreiter et al. in view of Flaschka et al. Applicant respectfully asserts that both cited U.S. patents are owned by Siemens Aktiengesellschaft which is also the assignee of the present application. The present application was filed after Nov. 29, 1999. Thus, Schreiter and Flaschka are not applicable prior art.

IV. Dependent Claims

The claims 2-7, and 9-14 are dependent claims and, thus, include all the limitations of the respective independent claims 1 or 8. Therefore, these claims are patentable at least to the extent of the respective independent claims.

SUMMARY

In light of the above remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejection is respectfully requested. It is further submitted that the application is now in condition for allowance and early notice of the same is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner have any questions, comments or suggestions in furtherance of the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the agent of record by telephone or facsimile.

Applicants do not believe that any other fees are due at this time; however, should any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 to 1.21 be required for any reason relating to this document, the Commissioner is authorized to deduct the fees from Deposit Account No. 02-0383, (*formerly Baker & Botts, L.L.P.*) Order Number 071308.0170.

BAKER BOTTS L.L.P.

Date: March 12, 2004

By: 

Andreas H. Grubert

(Limited recognition 37 C.F.R. §10.9)

One Shell Plaza

910 Louisiana Street

Houston, Texas 77002-4995

Telephone: 713.229.1964

Facsimile: 713.229.7764

AGENT FOR APPLICANTS